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## BEAUTIFUL STAR.

BY MARC O. ROLFE.

Oh, beautiful star, as thou shinest afar,  
In the dark of night,  
With joy I gaze at thy gentle blaze,  
Thou gem of purest light!  
Thy lovely smile will from pain beguile,  
When the sorrowing seek relief;  
Thy kindly ray, in its own sweet way,  
Calls back the heart from grief.  
The dazzling light of the diamond bright,  
The brilliant star of the zodiac,  
And its partial ray on the proud and gay  
Alone will deign to shine;  
But thou smilest as fair on the brow of care  
As on the joy-ite eye,  
Thy ray of love, from the realms above,  
Brings the worm on high.  
Oh, beautiful star, as thou shinest afar,  
In the azure vault of heaven,  
A lovely power is given,  
To whisper of Heaven to the soul that's riven,  
To smile on the sad and the gay;  
And ever is lent, with thy sweetest balm,  
Thy gentle and lovely ray.

## The Black Crescent: OR, COALS AND ASHES OF LIFE.

A MASKED MYSTERY OF BALTIMORE.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "HOODWINKED," "RALPH HAMON, THE CHEMIST," "THE WARNING ARROW," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

WINTER—1871. How mournful the dull, half-smothered voice of the wind as it coursed around the corners and through the streets of the old Monumental! How peculiar the sound of business hum, and how dreary the darkness of advancing night, misted with thick-falling snow!

It was very cold and cheerless; but the rich parlors of Harnden Forde, on Eutaw street, were ablaze and warm, and no gloomy touch of the icy air without could enter there.

Eola Forde, a beautiful girl of twenty-two years—we say girl, for four of those years might have been stricken off without being missed—with rosy cheeks, sweet lips, deep blue eyes, and hair like gilded silk, sat upon one of the rich sofas; and a dainty hand was clasped by a young man at her side, whose words, anon, brought a mantling crimson to the temples of his companion.

At a glance, we know them to be lovers.

"Speak, Eola; why are you silent? You never acted in this way before! Oh! have you changed toward me? Have I lost the jewel I so dearly prized as my own? Surely—"

"Austin, Austin," she interrupted, at last, breaking the silence which had called forth the young man's words; "I have not changed—indeed I have not—but—"

"But what? Ah! you'll tell me, now, why you have behaved so singularly all the evening?"

She cast a quick glance around her, to see that they were alone, and then, leaning close to him, whispered:

"Dear Austin, could my own heart's blood be shed to make you happy, I would give it! But listen: something has happened—I don't know what—to make me really afraid of father. He said that if I married you, it would send him to his grave, and I would be accursed forever! Siope!—listen: he said you were sent to fulfill a terrible prophecy—to perform an awful mission! He said I must not marry you, of all persons!—better stab myself at once! Now, Austin—oh! what can all this mean? You don't know how frightened I am! What—what shall I do?"

She had scarce ceased, when the folding doors between the two parlors were slowly, noiselessly opened, and a man stood there, gazing steadfastly at them.

The sofa partially fronted the windows, and close to them did not see him.

He was a man of full sixty years, with sparse locks of snowy white, and smooth-shaven face. His features were remarkably thin, like his body, arms and limbs. The eyes were deeply sunken and a dark line marked the lower lid; while the countenance was ghostly pale and of indefinable expression. It was Harnden Forde.

With one hand upon the door-knob—still and motionless he watched them.

Austin Burns looked upon the fair girl at his side in veriest astonishment.

"In Heaven's name, Eola!—what are you saying?"

"Just what father said to me this morning, Austin! What am I to do? I am not only at a loss to understand what he meant, but I am also terribly uneasy. Have you seen him since you were here last?"

"No."

"Then you can form no idea of the change that has come over him."

"I am amazed, Eola! Oh! can it be I am to lose you?" and he clasped the little hand tighter, as if afraid it was to be snatched away there and then.

"No—no—no Austin; not that! But we must wait—wait until—"

"ETERNITY!" interrupted a sepulchral voice.

Harnden Forde stood before them.

With a cry, Eola started to her feet and clutched the back of the sofa for support, as she shrank before the strange light of her father's eyes.

"Mr. Forde; really you take us by surprise—" began Austin; but he stopped short, as the old gentleman fixed a steady, half-meaningless gaze upon him.

He then saw in Harnden Forde a picture that, for a moment, chilled his veins.



"Ha! a witness!" he cried, as he turned and beheld a woman in black garments, and closely veiled.

So thin, pale, haggard; like a living corpse; with ashen lips; speechless; terrible to contemplate.

Harnden Forde spoke not another word; but raising one hand, a long, white, skinny finger pointed toward the door.

"Father! Father!" burst from Eola's lips, as she made a movement forward; but her courage failed her.

Obeying the silent command of that finger, governed by an uncontrollable awe, Austin arose and, step by step, retreated from the room.

Eola strove to speak. She stretched forth her hands to detain her lover; but they fell nerveless at her side, and her lips seemed glued together.

The eyes of Harnden Forde followed Austin, till the latter had disappeared, and then, in a hollow voice, he bade his daughter follow him, and returned to the back parlor.

She was faint and dizzy, and tottered after him—feeling as though she would cast herself down and scream; but was forced to keep her feet by some nameless, irresistible power.

"Father!" she cried, falling on her knees beside the chair where he had seated himself; "father! oh! in Heaven's name, tell me what ails you? You frighten me! Don't look at me in that way!"

"My child—you have seen Austin Burns again, and I told you, yesterday, it was my wish that you should give him up forever; were his slow-spoken words, as he fixed his dark, sunken eyes upon her, in an unsteady, wavering manner.

She had scarce left him when the door-bell struck with a louder echo than usual to its small brass gong.

There was something in the clear sound as it broke the stillness of the house, which roused Harnden Forde, with a start, from his random reverie; and he listened to the step of the servant who answered the summons.

Presently the door of the back parlor opened.

"There's a man in the vestibule to see you, sir."

"Who—who is it?"

"That I don't know, sir; for his face is hid by a broad-brim hat."

"Is there no card?—no name?"

"No, sir."

Harnden Forde thought a moment. It was already growing late. Who could call upon him at that hour?

"Show him in," he said, at last.

The visitor was admitted.

A tall, broad-shouldered individual, wrapped in a heavy overcoat, with pants tucked in a pair of heavy cowhide boots, and a black, slouch hat pulled down over his brow.

It was more unaccountable, from the fact that, hitherto, Harnden Forde had always greeted the young man cordially, when the latter visited his betrothed.

Upon his entrance, Forde arose.

"You wish to see me, sir?"

"And is this, indeed, Harnden Forde?"

He returned a deep voice, questioningly.

"It is."

"How changed, since last we met!"

He turned his back, regarding him closely.

"Remove your mask, that I may—"

"No. Here—read this," presenting a slip of paper as he spoke.

In a moment the boy vanished, his clear voice crying his last copy of the *Bulletin*, upon which he was "stuck"—a thing unaccountable, when considering the impetus given to the circulation of that paper by its having been the first to furnish Baltimore reams with the authentic news of the downfall of Paris.

Walking to the nearest gaslight, Austin read as follows:

"Meet me, to-night, on the Jones' Falls bridge, at Five o'clock, and your life mystery shall be solved. I will tell you who you are." *A Friend.*

The tiny paper was crunched in his grasp, and an indescribable thrill shot through his frame.

"Who can it be?" he exclaimed, gazing vacantly at the snow-covered pavement.

"Who can tell me who I am? Heavens! I never thought! Can the mystery of my identity be the cause of Forde's behavior toward me? But, how could he have learned—ah! here—some one will explain all! Then, Eola—dear, sweet girl—I may possess you yet, if that is the ground of your father's action! How opportune this friend!"

He consulted his watch. It was after ten o'clock.

"The note does not say what time. I'll go now."

He started off at a quick pace, carefully preserving the note; for it was most valuable to him.

At the corner of Baltimore and Eutaw streets, a car overtook him, and getting in, he seated himself to meditate in eager anticipation of the expected news.

The man on the opposite side of the street followed after him, and when Austin got into the car, he of the glasses ran ahead and jumped onto the front platform, sharing the driver's snowy "berth."

Both the watcher and the watched were scarce out of sight, when a man and woman, who had evidently been spying the movements of the others, glided out from the shade of another door-step, close by.

"Start upon your mission. Wait," said the woman; "I will be at the library window at twelve. There's mischief afoot, and I must prevent it."

With these words, she sped after the car; while the man took his way across the street.

The last-named party was the bearer of the note which preyed so overwhelmingly upon the mind of Harnden Forde.

A word of Austin Burns at this point.

He was, at least, twenty-five years of age.

His face was not what the fastidious would term handsome; but, there was that in it

"Evening Bulletin, second edition. Bulletin str; one cent!"

"No, and young Burns was hastening away; when the boy ran alongside of him, and continued:

"I guess you must be he, sir; is your name Burns?"

"Yes." Austin paused.

which bespoke an honorable mind, and therefore, won respect.

The young man knew no relative in the world. When in his twentieth year, he was called to the bedside of one whom he had always considered his uncle—then dying. And there he learned something astounding of himself.

The gentleman was not his uncle; but had assumed that position toward him, ever since the night he found Austin upon his door-step, with the little chubby hands tightly clasping a purse containing notes to the amount of twenty thousand dollars!

Fortunately, he fell into good hands. The money was placed out at interest, and appropriated to the benefit of the little waif.

Austin received a thorough education, grew to the estate of manhood, and, at the crisis mentioned, came into the possession of the money.

But the mystery of his birth was a burden to his mind.

Nothing seemed to present in which he could discover a clue; and time and again he had given over, discouraged—only to find himself yearning more and more, as the months flew by, for one bright ray to dispel the cloud.

An acquaintance was formed with Eola. They grew intimate—loved. Harnden Forde gave him warmest encouragement; and the scene which had been enacted within the half hour, the unfathomable words of Eola—both combined to strike upon his brain like a thunderbolt, to confuse and distract his thoughts.

But, if Harnden Forde had discovered the young man's ignorance of his birth, and his late action was based upon that, then Eola was not yet lost!

"A friend" was ready to aid, to clear the mystery, to furnish all desirable information.

Alighting at Harrison street, he walked up to Fayette, and turned to the bridge.

It was a dim, uninviting locality. The snow had ceased to fall, and the murky surrounding lent a deserted gloom; while the high shot-tower reared its lofty bulk before him, like a grim specter of gigantic proportions.

"There is no one here!" fell from his lips, as he looked about him for some sign of the "friend."

As if in reply, there was a light step behind him, and a muffled figure came up.

"You are Austin Burns?" said an unknown voice, from behind a thick coat collar.

"That is my name. Did you send me a note?"

"Yes."

"Then I am here in answer to it. You signed yourself a friend. I do not know you."

"You are the affianced of Eola Forde?"

"I am; but it does not concern you."

"It does."

"This is not our business, sir," interrupted the young man.

The figure drew nigher. But, Austin was not suspicious.

"You would know who you are? But I can not tell you—"

"Then you have written a falsehood! For what purpose?"

"This! curse you!"

Something flashed before the young man's eyes. There was a quick bound—a thud—and Austin, with a faint groan, sank down upon the snow.

"Murderer!" hissed a voice in the ear of the unknown.

"Ha! a witness!" he cried, as he turned and beheld a woman in black garments, and closely veiled.

Again the murderous knife was poised to strike, when she threw back the veil, and stepped to within a few inches of him.

One glance, one searching scrutiny of a moment's duration, and, with a startled exclamation, he fled from the white face which so fearlessly confronted him, as if pursued by an apparition from the grave, dropping the knife in his precipitate retreat.

Kneeling beside Austin Burns, the woman placed a hand over his heart. It still beat.

The warm blood, from an ugly wound in the left shoulder, crimsoned the white carpet about them.

But the blow had not proven fatal; and though she might not have been a physician or surgeon, she saw this, and, also, that he was not entirely insensible.

Overcome by the suddenness of the assault, wrought upon by the peculiar sensation of cold steel in his flesh, besides the fact of having struck his head against the wooden railing as he fell, Austin lay in a semi-conscious state.

Presently he opened his eyes, and, under the impression that the would-be assassin stood over him, he made an effort to regain his feet, at the same time grasping the arm that was busy staunching the cut.

"Easy, sir. Be very careful. You are badly hurt."

"Who are you?" he asked, faintly, perceiving, for the first time, that it was a woman.

"A friend," was her brief reply, still busy with his wound.

"Ah! then you sent me the note which brought me here—and to this accident!"

"No. It was an enemy to both of us. I had hoped to prevent this, but arrived too late. There—rise now. But move slowly. Your wound can be better dressed, soon."

"Where is the wretch who struck me?"

"Gone. But, come, Mr. Burns, you must go with me. I do not live far."

"You know my name? You are a stranger to me."

"Though a stranger, you have not a true friend. Trust me, and you shall not regret it. Your life is not safe in the city of Baltimore, while you are the affianced of Eola Forde! There are those who hate you; and the hate is deadly, for you do not know your enemies. Ah! here is the knife," (picking up the weapon, whose bright blade had attracted her glance). "Come, now. Your enemies must think you dead. It will serve our plans to defeat them. I am deeply concerned in your welfare, Mr. Burns—deeper than you can imagine. Come!"

Guided by an impulse, which prompted him to obey, he went with her.

They slowly left the bridge; he holding to her arm for a slight assistance; for the loss of considerable blood had left him in a condition somewhat weakened.

Continuing eastward a few squares, they entered a neat, two-story brick house, and Austin found himself in a plainly furnished but cozy parlor, where a glowing grate afforded a cheering warmth to his benumbed limbs.

"Be seated, sir. This is my home. I have no friends—live almost entirely alone. It may not be long before you know why I prefer seclusion, and why I am interested

in you. Stay here, while I go for a physician," saying which, she went out, and left him to his thoughts.

During the few seconds of her speech, he had seen, by the light of two large, brilliantly burning lamps, that his new friend was, to judge closely, about forty-four or five, with sad countenance, and dark eyes of weary glance. Her mien was that of a lady, and on the third finger of the left hand was a marriage ring, worn thin with the lapse of time.

White Austin Burns was fixing the features of the dark habited lady in his mind, and enduring no little pain from the stab in his shoulder, as he sat there awaiting her return with medical assistance—at precisely the same moment, two men were standing near the small side-counter at "Wilson's," seemingly engrossed with discussing the flavor and steam of a hot "punch"; while an occasional glance over the shoulder, betrayed the fact that they feared a third party to their low-voiced conversation.

### CHAPTER III. TWO THREATENING LETTERS AND A DESPERATE ACTION.

FURTHER back, closer to the wall, as if he momentarily expected a deadly attack on the part of the man before him, shrank Harnden Forde.

His lower jaw hung, and his sunken eyes seemed, for a second, to lose all light of intelligence—to become the orbs of a helpless idiot.

Helpless he certainly was; palsied in voice and limb, save that, in the latter, he trembled like a weakened frame before a stunning blast.

And this state of spirit, crushed beneath the weight of some mighty terror, was caused by the note he had just read.

At last, with an effort which required his every strength of self-mastery, he gasped, while he still cowered before his strange visitor:

"Will you tell me who you are? Where do you come from?"

"Again, and for the last time, I say, no matter. You know who I come from; so let that suffice. Come—your answer."

"Is—it the woman in this city?" persisted Bertha, "Is she the woman in this city?"

"Answer that note!" commanded the other, impatiently.

Harnden Forde was alone—miserable and mind-racked, in mental torture.

Repeating himself at the table, he drew forth a document from an inner pocket, and, first making sure he was alone, began to read.

The moments flew on. The stranger slumbered; though, had some invisible month whispered in his ear the coming result of his lack-vigil, a flash of lightning could not have been quicker, more sudden, than his return to wakefulness.

Dwelling upon some plot which evidently absorbed his thoughts, he relapsed into silence, and sat awaiting the arrival of midnight.

But whether the plan afoot was one of necessity or mere desire, there was a train of events pending which tended to destroy his calculations, and the beginning of it was, he fell asleep as he sat blinking at the coils in the grate.

The moments flew on. The stranger slumbered; though, had some invisible month whispered in his ear the coming result of his lack-vigil, a flash of lightning could not have been quicker, more sudden, than his return to wakefulness.

For a moment, Forde slackened the tension of the rope, and cried:

"I know you, Wat. Blake; though you were but a boy when I married your sister! So you were not lost in the mines, after all! I remember you well—"

"Vil—villain that you are! Would you murder me?"

"Tell me where your sister is!"

"I shall not!"

"Your stubbornness will not save your life!" tightening the cord again.

"I care—not! Kill—I—me! My—death will aveng—urg—g—g—"

He was strangling.

"I can not kill him!" flashed through Forde's mind; but he was determined to wring the desired information from his enemy, and partially maddened by a contemplation of his situation—between two fires, the flames of both threatening to lap him up in rude tongues of shame!—he twined his fingers round the ends of the rope, and pulled, till Blake's eyes rolled upward, and his whole powerful frame was convulsed in a struggle for breath.

"Tell me! Tell me!" he muttered, between gritting teeth, fearing that he was to fail in his desperate means to procure information. "Tell me—quick! You are dying!"

A relaxation of struggle, a fast-filming gaze, was all the answer he received.

Suddenly Forde was dealt a blow upon the head, which felled him, senseless, to the floor.

When he recovered, Wat. Blake had disappeared, and a stout cane, which lay beside him, told with what the unexpected blow had been delivered.

The gas-jet was extinguished; but by the dim light shed from the glowing grate, he saw a figure in the doorway.

Hurriedly regaining his feet, he advanced and was confronted by Eola.

(To be continued.)

these, he ascended to the room in the third story.

The door of the apartment was not locked, and cautiously opening it, he peered in.

A grim smile overspread Harnden's sickly-pale face, as he perceived the man sitting motionless, in the large chair; and by the sound of deep, regular respiration, which came to his ears, he knew that his strange guest slumbered.

On tip-toe, he entered. Gradually, and with the tread of a cat, he approached the unconscious man. Reaching his side, he stooped, to get a look at the face, and instantly a tremor seized his limbs, while through his brain flashed the two words:

"Her brother!"

The discovery appeared to cause him much perplexity. He drew back a step, as if undecided how to act. Within a second's flight, he added, suppressedly:

"He must die—not! not! not not murder!"

"But he must tell me where she is. 'Steady, nerves; steady. How I shake!"

Schooling his nerves to calmness, he gently placed the large rope over the breast and arms of the sleeping, thence conveying it around to the back of the chair, where he knotted it firmly.

Next, with a quick, adroit movement, he threw the remaining rope, in a turn, around the neck of his captive, and cried, hissing:

"Wake up, Wat. Blake! Wake up and meet your doom!"

The tone was of such earnestness as to seem like the voice of one who was indeed resolved upon murder.

With a gurgling exclamation, a twitch of the muscles, Wat. Blake aroused and essayed to release himself.

But the cords were strong. The turn at his neck was choking him. Harnden Forde's knee pressed firmly against his breast.

He could not speak; and, with eyes starting, and features alternately reddening and whitening under the torture of strangulation, he looked up into the fierce countenance that glowered over him.

For a moment, Forde slackened the tension of the rope, and cried:

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(To be continued.)

### Out in the World: THE FOUNDLING OF RAT ROW.

A ROMANCE OF CINCINNATI.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL,  
AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XI.

LITTLE ROMNEY TAGGART was very sick, and every day he became worse, until, at last, the old doctor, who was supposed to know a wonderful sight more than he really did, shook his head sadly, and said, not all in a professional, but in a very feeling way:

"Poor boy, there is no hope."

Yes, that was the sentence, and it was the verdict, too, that wracked Sarah Taggart had been waiting for so long. But, when it came, it almost stunned her to the verge of insensibility; and when little, manly Van came home that evening, with his fiddle and pence, his mother called him out on the landing, and said:

"Van, my poor boy, we will soon be all alone in the world."

The child looked up, and, while his lips trembled, he asked:

"Is—is Romney dying, ma?"

"Yes, Van, Romney is going. The doctor told me so to-day."

"Then he won't get well at all?" His eyes were swimming in tears as he put the query, and when his mother did not answer, but cried very hard instead,

"I don't know," replied the boy; "it sounds like a baby, don't it?"

"Very like," was the response; "but it's at our door."

"I'll go and look," he said; and he did.

In an instant he returned with Elinor Gregg's child in his arms.

"Oh, see," he exclaimed, "God has sent us this baby in place of our little Romney."

It was a beautiful baby—fat, rosy, and with large, wondering blue eyes, and Sarah Taggart clasped it in her arms and kissed its velvet cheek a dozen times before she spoke.

"Shall we keep it, mamma?" asked Van, after a while.

"No, dear, it would be too much trouble and we have not the means," she replied.

"But I will work for it; so hard," pleaded Van, "and when I come home I'll mind it all the time—so I will."

She could not resist that appeal, and there was, too, a void in her heart that this little waif could help to fill, she thought.

"What is its name, I wonder?" said Mrs. Taggart, after examining the emerald necklace carefully. "I can see no name on any thing."

She had scarcely uttered these words when her thumb, pressing against the largest stone, touched a spring, and the great jewel divided in equal halves, revealing a beautiful, girlish face in miniature, and engraved beneath it, the single word, "Elinor."

"Elinor! ain't it, ma?" said Van, after spelling slowly the inscription.

"Yes, that's its mother's name, I suppose."

"But, we won't call it Elinor, will we, ma?"

"Well, because it is too big and proud a name for a little baby. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," Mrs. Taggart thought so; "but, what will we call it?"

Van paused and looked at the ceiling an instant; then his face lighted up, and he said:

"Let's call it Romney, ma. Oh, let's call it Romney."

"But it's a girl, my boy; and it wouldn't do to call a girl Romney. At least it wouldn't sound well, I think."

Van thought it would make no difference; and seemed so very much disappointed that his kind mother finally said: "Well, Van, you can have your own way in this. She is your own protege, and you may call her what you please."

"Then I will call her Romney Taggart," he said, kissing the wee scarlet mouth in an exceedingly awkward, boyish way.

The little stranger did not relish the caress, for she drew down her brow until her face was a mere mass of purple wrinkles, in one of which her eyes were completely shut, and fell to crying like a vixen.

"Did I hurt her, ma?" asked the boy, a trifle vexed.

"No, my son, but little baby girls are very tender, I suppose."

"More boys?"

"A great deal more, I think."

Van Taggart remembered that for a long time, and during the first two years of Miss Romney Taggart's life he was very cautious when taking her on his knee that she was not hurt through his rudeness. Miss Romney had a very tender nurse, indeed.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### REMORE.

CHAUNCEY WATTERSON was very much distressed when he learned of Elinor's sudden disappearance, and this distress was heightened a fortnight after when he read in the newspapers that a woman answering Elinor's description in every particular had been found floating in the Ohio, below North Bend. The body had been taken to Lawrenceburg for interment, but the news reaching the ears of poor old Adam Gregg, he had the remains of his daughter taken to Butler county, and placed in the village graveyard, close beside the church in which Elinor Gregg had often worshipped in a child.

Chauncey Watterson was not wholly bad. He had been educated in a wicked school, and his training shamed his natural good train with a coating of false philosophy and worldliness; but, beneath this slime, there was a man's heart—a little wilful and stubborn, but tender, too.

The knowledge that he had driven Elinor Gregg to suicide preyed upon his mind night and day. He could not think of any thing else for weeks and months, and some of his friends twitted him on becoming melancholy because of his approaching marriage with Grace Alward.

Even the latter noticed how gloomy and abstracted he was growing, and one day, when they were alone in the sumptuous reception-room of the Alward mansion, she said:

"Chuncey, I fear you are not going to make a good husband at all."

"He looked up, astonished, and asked:

"Why, Grace?"

She pouted, as spoiled beauties are apt to do when men vex them, and said:

"Well, you are so gloomy at times, and I believe these times are increasing and last longer than they used to do. With our wedded day so near at hand, we should have more smiles."

"I will try to please you in that," he replied, pulling a rose-bud to pieces, "but I have had some business troubles, and I can not control my uneasiness at all times."

"Then tell me the cause of your trouble," she said, with a pretty, girlish animation, "and I will either put it altogether or help you to bear it."

He then shook his head and answered:

"No, it is bad enough for me to suffer, but you shall not."

A very sober light came into her face, and her eyes, which had been full of sunshine an instant before, now sought the carpet, full of shadows.

"You are not angry, Grace?" he asked, pleadingly.

"Yes, I am," she replied, hiding her face with the end of her scarf.

"And why are you angry?"

"Because you don't consider me fit to be your wife."

"But I do," he said, surprised.

"Well, then, why don't you tell me what troubles you so? I'm sure I could keep your secret, and if you think I could not, that it would be dangerous to intrust me with it, why, then, I'm not the woman you should marry."

This was spoken in a grave, serious tone—a tone that surprised Chauncey Watterson a good deal, and for the first time in his life he realized that Grace Alward was not merely a bright, silly, pleasant girl whom he could deceive very easily and, on whom reason would be wasted.

He saw, now, that he would have to employ different tactics, and so he said:

"Gracie, my own, you are right, and I will tell you every thing."

Her face lighted up again, and she put up her lips, and he kissed them.

"You see, I have been very wild," he began, "and have done a good many things which you would think doubtless very bad."

"But, you won't do so any more—will you?" she interrupted.

"God helping me, I hope not," he replied, solemnly; "but I have spent a great deal of money, and am in debt some."

"I will lend you the money to pay," she said, eagerly.

He put up his hand. "Oh, no, Grace, I'm not so bad as that. I have plenty to pay my debts, and a slight margin of sixty or seventy thousand left."

They talked a long while, and when they parted it was with the understanding that their marriage should be postponed until December in order to permit him to arrange all his affairs with a view to a lengthy absence in Europe.

Chauncey had now five months of a respite in which to ponder over his great crime, and nurse the arrow of remorse which rankled in his breast.

"Had I my life to live over again," he frequently exclaimed to himself, "Elinor Gregg would now be my wife instead of sleeping in the dishonored grave of a suicide."

But these regrets were vain, and keenly he felt this to be true. But his remorse made him sentimental, and one day, late in October, he wandered into the Delville graveyard.

The trees were weeping tears of blood upon the long, faded and tangled grass, which almost obscured the graves, and the setting sun was turning the dew that hung upon the flowers into purest, sparkling crystalline.

Two boys, playing hide and seek among the tombstones, stopped their play as they saw the moody man stalk by, and when he sat down and looked curiously about him, they gave up their frolic, and stole away to their homes.

The old sexton, however, coming out of the church, noticed the stranger, and bowed politely to him.

"Can you tell me where Elinor Gregg is buried?" asked Chauncey.

The old man took off his hat, produced a red bandana, and after wiping his purple forehead, said, very deliberately:

"Yes, sir; I can show you the spot."

"Would you be kind enough to do so?"

The sexton eyed Chauncey from underneath his shaggy eyebrows an instant, and said:

"Yes, sir, I'll do that—and gladly, too, 'cause Elinor, poor girl, was good at heart, though somewhat unfortunate. But, sir, this is a world of deceit and wickedness, and none of us as is raising children know what will become of them before they die yet."

Chauncey agreed with the old man, and, in reply to one of his questions, said:

"No, I'm no relative. I knew her once—a long while ago."

"This is the place, then," said the sexton, pausing before a little mound over which the grass grew very green.

"Why, there is no tombstone!" exclaimed Chauncey, after a silent survey.

"No," replied the sexton. "Adam Gregg was at a good penny of expense to bring her all the way from Lawrenceburg, and he couldn't afford a tombstone just yet, I guess."

"You can leave me here. I'll remain awhile," said Chauncey, seating himself on a flat tombstone close by Elinor Gregg's grave.

The sexton obeyed, and when he had disappeared from sight, the young man fell upon the small grave and wept like a child—weped for poor Elinor Gregg—for her child and his, which he thought was lying stark and dead in the big river—and wept for himself, too, whose evil deeds were now bearing Dead Sea fruit, full of gall-like bitterness.

The sun settled down into billows of golden splendor, and the moon arose, pale, bright and radiant, and still Chauncey Watterson knelt in the wet grass.

He felt very weak and dizzy when he stood up at last, and said to the senseless sod, which covered Elinor Gregg, "Farewell, forever!"

He staggered like a drunken man from the spot, and three weeks after, to the surprise of everybody, a tall, stately marble monument lifted its form from out the grass of Elinor's grave, and on a tablet in the center the sexton shaded his eyes and read:

"SACRED TO THE MEMORY

ELINOR GREGG,

Aged 19 years."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 77.)

### Overland Kit:

#### THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. ATKEN,

AUTHOR OF "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "WOLF DEMON," "WHITE WITCH," ETC.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE JUDGE "PUTS UP" THE CARDS.

The Judge stood just within the doorway, a look of blank amazement upon his face.

The others gazed into the room, and then they, too, cried out in astonishment.

The body of Gains Tendall was gone!

There was the bed, the blanket spotted with the blood that had welled from the wounds of the stricken man, showing plainly where the body had lain, but the body itself had disappeared.

The room was a small one, lit by a single window. At a glance the eyes saw all that it contained. The window too was closed.

"What has become of the body?" cried the Judge, in amazement.

"Dunred of I know!" replied Bill, in utter astonishment.

"You kept watch of the door, Rennet?" the Judge asked.

"Yes; we've not taken our eyes from it," the young man answered. "A mouse couldn't have got out without our seeing it, let alone a human."

"I'll swar' that neither hide nor hair's come out of this since you went away, Judge!" affirmed the driver.

"Some one must have removed the body through the window, then," Jones said, a dark look upon his face. He stepped to the easement and opened it.

The window looked out upon a small

shed. The Judge saw at a glance how easy it was for any one to ascend to the roof of the shed from the ground, and thus gain access to the room.

"I can not understand this," he muttered, in an undertone, communing with himself. "What can be the motive for this strange movement? Some one is dealing me a blow in the dark. I must be on my guard or else—" Then the Judge paused in his muttering speech as Rennet advanced to his side and looked out of the window.

"I guess the idea," Rennet said, in the ear of the Judge. "Some accomplice of the girl has removed the body by means of this window so as to destroy the proof against her."

"Yes, it looks like it," the Judge replied, slowly and thoughtfully.

"But it does not make any difference; we are not going to act according to the precise forms of law here. Both Bill and myself can swear that we saw the man dead. I think that our evidence will be enough to convince any one of the death of the man, even if we can not produce the body, or tell what has become of it."

"In my mind, the fact of the body being spirited away, is strong evidence of the girl's guilt," Jones said, with a covert glance into the face of the old man.

"Yes, it is so."

"I think that I had better search her room; there we may be able to secure some proof regarding this terrible deed."

"That is the proper course, Judge."

"You had better make the search, and I will assist you," the Judge said, slowly.

Judge Jones seemed strangely ill at ease.

The two then went into Jinnie's room, Jones bidding Haynes remain with the prisoner in the entry.

A long breath came from Judge Jones' lips as he entered the little apartment. It was plainly but neatly furnished.

"About the bloody knife?" the Judge asked.

"I secured it last night; Bill has it now," Rennet answered. "I did not wish to trouble him, and he made him sentimental, and one day, in October, he wandered into the Delville graveyard.

The trees were weeping tears of blood upon the long, faded and tangled grass, which almost obscured the graves, and the setting sun was turning the dew that hung upon the flowers into purest, sparkling crystalline.

Two boys, playing hide and seek among the tombstones, stopped their play as they saw the moody man stalk by, and when he sat down and looked curiously about him, they gave up their frolic, and stole away to their homes.

The old sexton, however, coming out of the church, noticed the stranger, and bowed politely to him.

"Can you tell me where Elinor Gregg is buried?" asked Chauncey.

The old man took off his hat, produced a red bandana, and after wiping his purple forehead, said, very deliberately:

"Yes, sir; I can show you the spot."

And as the Judge spoke, his eyes fell upon the blood-stained apron that Jinnie had worn on the preceding evening.

"More proof," he said.

A little trunk stood in one corner. It was unlocked, and Rennet opened it. He pulled the clothes out carelessly; as he did so, a folded sheet of note paper fluttered to the ground. The Judge snatched it up easily.

As he opened it a peculiar expression flashed across his face; and a fierce light burned in his cold eyes.



# SATURDAY JOURNAL.

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## TO MY LITTLE DARLING.

BY ARNOLD ISLER.

The moon is shining o'er us,  
The stars are brightly gleaming;  
The scene is fair before us,  
Sweet love, with dark eyes beaming.

My arms fondly enfold thee,  
With rapture to my bosom;  
My eyes with joy behold thee,  
My love, my pretty blossom!

My love of loves sincerest!  
From thee I part not sever,  
Fair to thee! Never, dearest!  
I must love thee forever!

And if o'er my blossom,  
Dark clouds threaten and gloom,  
I'll take thee to my bosom,  
Till the angry storm is over.

I'll shield thee when in trouble,  
From tongues that idly prattle;  
Though misfortunes round thee double,  
I'll bravely for thee battle.

And when thy heart meets sadness,  
And gloom around thee presses,  
I'll win thee back to gladness  
With kisses and caresses.

But, I hear the watch-dog snarling;  
The old folks are behind us!  
So kiss me good-night, darling,  
I hardly think they'll find us.

## In the Wilderness.

III.—WADING THE RIFTS.

There was a buzz of preparation early next morning in the fishermen's camp. Rods were taken out and fitted; leaders, flies and lines prepared; reels put in order; while the old-fashioned fishermen of the party were out procuring bait. The woods were lovely to-day, vocal with the song of the early birds, and fresh and green under the glistening dew of the morning. White feathery clouds sailed slowly across the breaks in the overhanging vista of branches, and the river made strange music as it rippled on over the stones.

Viator was a spectacle for a lady's society as he appeared for the rift-fishing. He wore a pair of heavy boots which reached nearly to his thighs, impervious to water, yet lightly made in every part except the soles, which were nearly an inch thick and furnished with spikes like those of an Irish brogan. Upon his head was a huge broad-brimmed soft hat, stained and discolored by mud and water. His other garments, consisting of a rough "Jersey" and buck-skin pants, evidently had seen hard service. Add to this a fish-basket and rod, and you have the fisherman complete.

Take his opposite, in the person of Augustus Bacon. He wore the approved fishing costume of the cities—tight pants, short coat—which made his long legs look longer still—gaiters, skull-cap, and straps, belts, and boxes without number. Old Ben grinned satirically at the sight, and was heard to mutter a fervent aspiration that he might come to grief. How well his expectations were realized, let the sequel show.

The rest of the party were equipped as they should have been, for they had taken lessons from experience. Augustus Bacon's was the only "fancy dress" of the party.

"What you going to do with that livin' beast of prey?" roared Ben, in strong disgust, as he saw the stretcher which the amateur fisherman was putting on—a gaudy salmon-fly, which no man who knew any thing about the business would have dreamt of using.

"I want a heavy fly for a stretcher," said Gustus, looking up with a sickly grin. "Do you think it too small?"

"Too small! Look here; if you was going to fish for whales or hippopotamuses, you might need a fly as big as that. But, seeing you are arter rayther smaller game, seems to me you might use a fly that didn't weigh a ton. See here; I'm going to do the fair thing by you. Now, don't you undertake to wade the rifts. But you jest take my bait-box and scoot along the bank, and wherever you see a likely place, try 'em on. Like ez not you'll strike suthin' if you have good luck!"

"Ridiculous! I am going to fish where the rest do."

"Then go on. Only, if you hook that grapping-iron you've got on the end of your line into a tree, it's your own look-out, not mine. Come along boys. Don't try to put your rods together until you get into the river."

They marched on in silence for half an hour, the bushes growing so thick upon the banks that it seemed impossible to get to the river. Gustus began to look blue, and his sadness increased as he saw Ben part the thick bushes and reach the river-side, and, instead of stopping, walk into the water up to his knees, followed by the rest of the party, leaving him upon the bank.

"Where are you going, you fellows?" he gasped. "I can't do that, you know."

"Never know what you can do till you try it on, boss," said Ben. "You kin hev the other side, where the water is shallow. Spread out there boys, and leave space enuf between you so that you won't get tangled up, and then give it to 'em!"

There was a rattling of reels, the chink of metal, and the rods were ready for use. Viator was quickest at the work, and before the others were ready, his hand, holding the lithie nine-ounce lancewood, was thrown back over his shoulder, and the brown cookies and *harp's ears* lighted upon the water, twenty feet below. He was in the middle of the rift, where the water rose half-way to his thighs. Next to him was Scribbler, an old votary of hook and line, who left a place next him for Gustus, if he could pluck up courage to cross.

Viator let the light hair line float for a moment on the water, and then threw again. There was a little circle in the water where the fly lighted, and two or three bubbles rose to the surface. "Ah-lia, my lad!" muttered Viator. "You see it, do you? Let us try once more." Again the flies sailed through the air and dropped lightly on the water, and the next moment the lithie rod doubled in the strong hand of the fisherman, and the shrill music of the reel was heard as the line spun out through the rings, and, a moment after, a noble fish breached from the current with erected fins and dilated gills, struggling to shake the strong tackle from his mouth. Down he went into a deep pool, and Viator gave him the butt, and began to reel in slowly, for the fish was a good one, and full of spirit.

The pose of a skillful fisherman is beautiful. He stands with one hand holding the rod just above the reel, his other hand grasping the reel and working it according to the nature of the fish he has hooked, his watchful eye upon the water, where, from time to time, the struggling trout appears. The fight is soon over, and, with a shout of

victory, the elated fisherman scoops up his first prize and deposits it in the basket, and prepares his cast again.

By this time the others are at work, and each has hooked a fish, and even Spencer, under the watchful care of old Ben, has succeeded in taking in a fish weighing nearly half a pound. "Gustus is prancing wildly up and down the bank, shouting to his companions to know if it is 'very cold,' and lamenting his untried gaiters. At length his desire to distinguish himself got the better of his fear of the water, and in he went. The spring cold water sent a chill to his bones, but he advanced bravely, until stepping on a slippery stone, he displayed the heels of his gaiters to the admiring gaze of his friends, while his head disappeared beneath the tide. There was a confused spluttering in the water, and Gustus sat up, woefully demoralized and disgusted with rift-fishing.

"Thar," said Ben, as he landed a large trout and deposited it in his basket. "You can't git any wetter, that's one comfort; so you may as well pick yourself up and git away."

It had taken an effort to speak these words; but Isadore only shook her head wearily.

"No, there is no time now. To-morrow

I shall be Mrs. St. Lawrence, and you must

give me Dr. Greyson for my brother. For-

give me for telling you my story, sister

Nell; let us forget it as soon as we can

Now, shall we go down and see our country

relations?"

And Nell wondered at the regained look

of calm composure on Isadore's face.

"So we've come in time to see the weddin', eh, Isadore? I guess you didn't calkerate on us, did you, now?"

Honest-hearted aunt Hetty had pressed

sounding kisses on the girls' cheeks, and

then turned to enjoy a little gossip with the

bride-elect. But, Isadore was encased in

her invulnerable armor of frigidity.

"We certainly had not expected you.

"Well, that's the better for me, seein' as

how I only brought my black silk along

Amasa, where's them apples and walnuts

Dr. Greyson put in the wagon when we

started?" That reminds me, he sent his love

to you, Isadore—not knowin', you see, that

you was very few guests invited."

"Well, that's the better for me, seein' as

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Amasa, where's them apples and walnuts

Dr. Greyson put in the wagon when we</p

The coffin was borne solemnly forth and deposited in the hearse. Then the little procession moved softly off.

Lorin Gray's bosom heaved; his face palced, and he strode away at a headlong pace.

The hearse and the single accompanying carriage wound their way along Newburg street until they reached Meltham. Into this they turned.

As the carriage reached Appleton street, a coarse-clad woman standing on the corner started and gazed into it at the occupants. With a low exclamation of anger, she turned and strode back to Canal street.

The cemetery was reached. Then, after some delay, the coffin was lowered into the grave, and the minister, in solemn tones, committed the "dust to dust."

Then all was over, and Bessie Raynor felt that almost all light had gone out from her.

After having seen the carriage and those who rode in it to Silas Raynor's funeral, Nancy Hurd—*for it was turned up Canal street, and, in a few moments, paused by the front door of the Raynor home. She glanced around her. Nobody was observing her.*

She tried the door-knob; it yielded. A moment, and she was inside. She paused and listened.

Then a faint voice wailed down stairs from above:

"Who's there?"

Nancy Hurd did not answer, but turned to the staircase, and strode boldly up. A moment, and she stood in the room of the cripple.

Ross started, and looked at her with great, wondering eyes. But then, a pleasant expression settled on his thin, wan face, and she glanced around her. Nobody was observing her.

"Ah! Nancy, is it you? How kind in you!" and he held his unhurt hand toward her.

The change which came into the woman's face was remarkable. A softness—a real yearning, motherly expression was there, as she walked to the bed, and took his wasted hand in hers. Then she bent over him, and a tear came to her eye.

"Poor Ross!" she murmured. "I am sorry you are hurt. I was coming by, and concluded to stop in and see you. But, is Bessie in her room?"

"No, Bessie has gone to—*to the funeral, and the poor fellow broke down.*

"Ah! I thought I heard her in the room there."

"No, Nancy; and since I've been wounded, she stays in the room here—through this door. She wants to be near me."

Nancy started. Ross had told her what she wanted to know.

"I simply came, my poor fellow," she said, "to say how d'ye do, and to bring this jolly for you."

She drew from beneath her apron a bowl.

"Thank you, Nancy. May God bless you for your kindness to me."

"Good-by, Ross," she said, after a pause, and she held her hand to him.

He took it, and held it some moments as if loth to let it go.

The woman noticed this act of affection, and as tears came into her eyes again, she leaned over him, and kissed him tenderly. Then she turned suddenly, wrenched her hand rather rudely from his thin fingers, and left the apartment.

At a later hour, when Bessie Raynor returned from her sad trip to the desolate cemetery, she started as she alighted from the carriage in front of her humble home; for, just as she had thanked Black Phil for his kindness, she chanced to glance toward the adjacent street-corner.

She saw there a form she could not mistake—a bowed, though manly, form, with a sad, glistened face. A moment, however, and it had gone.

Bessie Raynor knew it was Lorin Gray, and, do what she could, as she caught sight of his bended, woe-begone figure, and of his sad, reproaching face, she could not prevent the flutter in her bosom, and the aching of her heart.

Then, as the carriage rolled away, without further notice of Black Phil, who had alighted, Bessie ran quickly into the house.

And Lorin Gray, who, with bated breath, had watched the scene—who, untiringly, had waited for her return, straggled away, with a heavy load weighing him down.

The day passed slowly.

A terrible desolation settled upon Bessie, and, in the silence of the sick-chamber, which was disturbed by no sound save the hard, short breathing of the wounded boy, she bowed her head again and prayed to God for help.

Ross Raynor slept soundly.

Bessie arose, leaned over him, and gently kissed his brow. Then she withdrew through the open door to the adjoining room.

In ten minutes, she was asleep—sleeping a deep, but disordered slumber.

The night wore on. Suddenly, Ross Raynor awoke with a start. A smothered voice had broken upon his ear, and aroused him.

He slowly turned his head.

The light in the lamp was still burning brightly.

Then the cripple saw a sight which, for a moment, froze his blood and struck him dumb.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

MOTHER MOLL.

Ross RAYNOR strove to speak; but, his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not find utterance. He held his breath and looked.

A fearful tableau was revealed to the cripple's eyes.

Bessie Raynor was lying on her bed, in the room next her brother's, while above her towered the brawny form of a woman. In the hand of that woman a long, keen-edged knife was glittering.

Ross Raynor uttered a low groan and hid his face. Then, as with a giant's strength, forgetful of his state of weakness, of his prostrated form, of his broken arm, he sprang from bed and rushed into the other room.

With a low howl of rage, the fiend turned. She saw who had stood between her and murder. She sprang upon him, clutching him by the throat, and bore him backward into his own room, pulling the door to after her.

"Spare me, spare me, Nancy! Oh!" "Hah! 'tis you, Ross," and the woman suddenly released her hold and glared at him.

"Yes, Nancy, 'tis I. Oh! do not murder me, do not harm my sister, she has never harmed—"

"Never harmed me!" she hissed, in a low, deep voice; "why, boy, she has come between me and my husband. She has stolen his love from me, and, by heaven! she shall die!"

She suddenly turned and strode back toward the door. But the same puny hand again held her back.

"Nancy, Nancy," whispered the boy.

"Bessie has not done what you say! Oh, believe me, Nancy!" and he stole his unwounded arm softly around the woman's neck, and lifted his big, bright, melancholy eyes to hers. "Nancy," he continued, "I know you love me, and, I know not why, I do love you, Nancy, though people say you are wicked. Oh! Nancy, we are only two, my sister and I; my brother, Ralph, is far away. Sometimes I think he'll never come back. Nancy, be kind to me, yet, and spare Bessie," and he bowed his head on her broad bosom and wept silently.

It was a strange light that beamed over that hardened woman's face of bronze; it was a strange fire which gleamed in her eyes; it was not a wicked or a vengeful fire. Then, that fire was dimmed, extinguished to its place. Then she leaned her head softly down and bent her old eyes, in a stare, on the floor.

"I have not read the stars!" she murmured. "I have not burned the black hell-bore; I have not buried the deadly night-shade in vain! A vision rises before me! Oh! ye unsound powers! A terrible vision of flood and flame, of crushed men and women, of roasted children and gray-haired old men! And, my noble Lorin! Oh! heaven, the picture is dim! But, he struggles through it! And now, Bessie Raynor, now, proud Minerva Ames—Ha!" She paused suddenly, lifted her hand, and gazed toward the door.

A tall, manly form was standing there, silently, solemnly.

*(To be continued—commenced in No. 73.)*

#### The Ocean Girl: OR, THE BOY BUCCANEER.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST,  
AUTHOR OF "CRUISER CRUSOE," ETC., ETC.

#### CHAPTER IV.

ABOARD THE DUKE OF KENT.

We must now introduce those upon whom Captain Joseph Gantling intended to carry out his designs, the nefarious ones of which Edward Drake scarcely understood. However manly his feelings and emotions, he was but a boy, and hardly able to realize the abominable intentions of the buccaneer toward the crew and passengers of the Duke of Kent.

This was a splendid vessel, built for the Indian trade, and about to set out partly on special service—that is, with an amount of valuable treasure on board, which, as far as people in general knew, might have been a cargo of black diamonds from Newcastle, and partly to convey to India certain important passengers and public functionaries, who objected to the delays and wearisome life attendant on a convoyed fleet, when good sailors are compelled to wait for the merest crawling butter-tub.

The Duke of Kent was a large vessel, well armed, powerfully manned, and in every way fitted out with a view to the comfort of its passengers, as well as their defense. It was war time; but a large and well provided Indianaman considered itself good enough for most French frigates, so that on this point little emotion was felt.

She softly took away her arms, released his single one from her neck, and then, stooping, lifted him gently to the bed.

"Now, Ross," she said, "go to sleep again. Your sister is safe. I swear it. For your sake, I spare her. As for me, poor black-hearted Nancy, I'll suffer on in silence. I'll bear my burden, as best I may. But, Ross, promise me that you'll say nothing of this. There may be time left for me yet, to do better, to do some good. Promise me, Ross, and I'll begone."

She softly took away her arms, released his single one from her neck, and then, stooping, lifted him gently to the bed.

"I promise, I promise, dear Nancy! May God bless you! And Nancy, I know you will not care, I will pray to Him, that He may lighten your load, that He may bless you!"

The woman gazed at his wan face, now lighted up with enthusiasm; she leaned down and imprinted a warm, passionate kiss upon his forehead. Then, seizing the knife, she was gone.

Bessie had slept unconsciously through all.

The next afternoon, or rather evening, for the mill had disgorged its living burden, and sent them forth to breathe the fresh air, Lorin Gray strode across the eastern bridge and turned into the Andover road.

A cloud was upon his brow, and with eyes fastened on the boards at his feet, he continued his way. Dark thoughts were filling his mind and racking his brain.

"And Bessie, to fling me aside," he muttered, "for that dark-browed villain, for that man whom her father hated, who would have murdered her brother, who has a wife, deny it as he may. Oh! heavens! and she a child!" But—

He paused, as a sudden thought seemed to strike him. "Have I been true? Have I loved Bessie and Minerva, both? Do I love them both? Can I be true to both? Have I not told my love to Minerva? Oh! God, I have, indeed, been cruel—cruel to the poor child."

"But, I must hurry on. My poor old mother, I have neglected her. I have put her from my memory. But, to-night I'll see her and will make amends. Poor old mother, and she loves me so little!"

Night had now fallen, but Lorin Gray looked neither to the right nor the left, hurried on.

In a plainly, but comfortably furnished room of a small, unpretending house, nestled in the woods on the Andover road, some three miles from Lawrence, sat an old woman—a strange, mysterious-looking woman. She was nearly seventy years of age, and her long, white hair smoothed softly away from her forehead fell, unrestrainedly, in a snow-white mass upon her rounded, aged-bent shoulders. But the face, though wrinkled and tanned, scarred and seamed as it was, in the long battle of life, was kind and wondrously fresh. Her eyes sparkled and flashed as she hummed an old-time ditty and gazed around her.

She was clad in a manner that betokened she was fair-to-do in a worldly way, or, had some kind relative to care for her and her wants in her old age.

A fire burned brightly in the stove; on that stove a plain supper was cooking. The windows were up and the doors were open; for, in addition to the heat of the weather, the stove rendered the room uncomfortably warm and stifling.

This old woman's name was Mary Gray, but she was commonly called Mother Moll. Singular powers were attributed to her by lowly people, and by some who belonged to the higher walks of life. It was asserted that she had the power of divination, of telling of the past, and of unavailing the future. Some called her witch, others spiritualist; but Mother Moll unpretendingly, yet boldly, designated herself a fortune-teller. One thing is certain, it was by this calling that she had made her bread in her younger days.

Certain it is, too, that Mother Moll, if hearers and authority were to be believed, had performed some wonders, almost passing credence.

She was the woman whom Lorin Gray called mother; yet she was not his mother in the flesh, and the young man knew it; but Mother Moll stood to him as such, having reared him and taken care of him from an uncertain, yet a very early age. She had fed him, had educated him as he grew up in the city of New York, and had procured a situation for him in the great metropolis. But, the young man longed again for home scenes, longed for her whom he had called mother, and without her bidding he had returned, a fine, handsome fellow.

Without her knowledge, he had obtained

work in the Pemberton Mill: the fortune-teller, while she frowned slightly, had welcomed him back with open arms.

This happened a number of years before the commencement of our story.

To-night she sat with her hands folded across her bosom and gazed, sometimes, out of the open door into the darkness of the gathering night; sometimes at the cheery glow of the stove, with the old-fashioned black tea-pot simmering thereon. As she gazed, the contented, happy look gradually faded from her countenance, and an expression of brooding, foreboding anxiety took its place. Then she leaned her head softly down and bent her old eyes, in a stare, on the floor.

"I have not read the stars!" she murmured. "I have not burned the black hell-bore; I have not buried the deadly night-shade in vain! A vision rises before me! Oh! ye unsound powers! A terrible vision of flood and flame, of crushed men and women, of roasted children and gray-haired old men! And, my noble Lorin! Oh! heaven, the picture is dim! But, he struggles through it! And now, Bessie Raynor, now, proud Minerva Ames—Ha!" She paused suddenly, lifted her hand, and gazed toward the door.

A tall, manly form was standing there, silently, solemnly.

"Father!" suddenly exclaimed the girl, "what light is that yonder, nearly in front of us?"

"Eh—what?" cried the officer, rising. The girl pointed to where a light was rocking on the water, in a somewhat unnatural and rapid manner.

"Some cable or other at anchor. Captain?"

"Admiral!" replied the skipper, stepping forward, and looking in the direction of the light.

"Why, what on earth can the fellow be doing there?" said the captain, who gave at the same time a whispered order to the man at the wheel. "He can't be at anchor, nor does it appear a vessel lying-to."

They were now within about fifty feet of the light, at which everybody was looking with some anxiety and curiosity. There was scarcely a breath of wind; the huge Indianaman surged but slowly forward, and not a word was spoken.

"Ship ahoy!" said a feeble voice.

An instant, at a sign from the captain, the helm was put down, and the vessel hove aback. A boat was then put out with all the precision and rapidity of a man-of-war. Six men rowed, while one of the mates steered. The huge vessel now stood still, except a slight sidling motion, and the boat disappeared in the gloom.

Nothing could have been more opportune for the captain of the Ocean Girl than the fog, which kept silently rolling down upon him, to turn day as it were into night, and to render the sea upon which he sailed one of the most dangerous in the world. Usually, nothing is more abhorrent to the feelings of a sailor, especially on a dangerous coast, than one of those remorseless clouds of vapor, which wrap him round in darkness, hiding from him rocks, light-houses, cliffs, and even the companion ship, that may be sailing within twenty yards in fancied security.

But now the event was all-important, and the buccaneer, without even reducing sail, which, under the circumstances, would have been the act of a prudent man, kept on his course for several hours, until he thought he might safely change his course, which he did, boldly heading for the Thames once more. The tack was changed, and scarcely was the sheeting home, when, sharp upon a wind, the Ocean Girl cut through the head sea, as with a knife. She was a beautiful sight always; but now she was like a bird that was frightened, and had spread her wings in flight.

Toward evening, the fog still continuing, and the coast of England being in almost dangerous proximity, Captain Gantling determined to lie to. This was done, and most rigid watch kept. For some time there was, despite the wind, a heavier fog than ever, cold, damp and yellow; but soon after the sun had set blood-red or angry, the vapor lifted.

The night was very dark, but with their glasses the captain and his chief officer swept the horizon from the deck, while Edward ran aloft, and did the same there.

"Be low!"

"What is it?"

"Here she comes with the wind," roared Edward, and came down by the run.

In an instant all hands were making sail, even royals and sky-sails fore and aft, and before twenty minutes, the studding sails were set; but still the royal cruiser, which had been at anchor on the tail of the sands, came down upon them head over heels.

Captain Gantling swore a round oath, and then gave orders to his lieutenant, who at once bade the men pass the buckets up to one watch aloft to wet the sails. The buckets were whipped up to the mast-head, and this maneuver was continued until a drizzling rain came on and rendered it unnecessary. It was pitch dark, without a moon; every light was put out, even the binnacle lamp, and a star being chosen as a guide, the schooner

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Gladly would he, after his swim, have renovated his body by means of some of those creature comforts which had originally been provided him, but this was impossible; his bread and meat were, no doubt, within the all-devouring maw of some monster of the deep, while his beer and rum were so commingled with the briny ocean, that not the ablest chemist that ever taught an admiring audience could have traced its presence.

There was nothing then left for him but to bend to circumstances, and wait upon that precarious tub-supported deck for such fortune as awaited him—capture by the sloop of war, safety from the buccaneer, or success and good luck on board the Indian and treasure ship. The reflections made the young sailor think somewhat seriously of other things; and it seemed to strike him, in that hour of peril and doubt, that perhaps the enterprise upon which he had started was not either the most honorable or the most proper upon which a youth might be engaged.

But then, said sophistry, what has society, or government, or the good people done to me that I should, having fallen into the hands of a contraband dealer, think much of what I am about to do to them? He fancied that there could be no life more delightful to a youth of high spirit and mighty resolves than that of a buccaneer, a skinner of the ocean, who only differed from the legalized privateers that swarmed on every sea, in wanting a commission from the king, a formality which, while dispensing them from control, left them to roam where they would, and act as beseemed them best.

Visions, too, of that island, rich with hopeful fruits, where eternal summer reigned, and where they were to rule as monarchs, with an indistinct notion of the importance of cherry lips and flashing eyes to the sum total of human happiness, passed through his mind, it is true, in an odd, dream-like way, but still sufficiently to influence you to whom the ideal of happiness was hitherto, to action, plenty of fighting, and plunder, with something of physical gratification in the end.

Thinking thus deeply, there fell a greater gloom upon the scene, and to the thick darkness of the fog was superadded the cloak of night. Ned Drake began to shiver, and to fancy too that he had entered upon a lane which had no turning. Luckily, as yet there was no sea on, though there was a bit of a breeze which, with the tide, made the raft bob up and down with an uneasy but by no means dangerous motion. Which way the tide was running it was impossible to say, though that it was moving fast could be made out by the constant wash of the water.

Trifles as it may appear to those on shore, who, unless utterly without means, have something always at hand to eat, Ned was getting hungry and faint, so that he knew the moment the sea rose, he should be powerless to hold on. This was terrible, especially as the Indian and all other vessels appeared to have resolved themselves into phantoms. Even the buccaneer had deserted him, though he had believed Captain Gantling would make a push to find out what had been his fate.

It was in reality a fearful position, and Edward began to feel his head getting dizzy, and his senses gradually leaving him, when a sound familiar, and not more familiar than welcome, reached his ears. It was his last chance, however, for he felt keenly that if this failed him, he must yield to the terrible impulse to sleep which was coming upon him, and then die.

The noise was that of a heavy boat—a large vessel, as a matter of course—forcing its way slowly through the water against the tide.

It was at no great distance, and if any proper look-out were kept, as a natural consequence his bobbing lights would be seen. Still he would not wholly trust to that, so, raising his voice, he hailed the passing sound. For some minutes no reply came, and then it was wafted on the breeze, through a ship's trumpet, indistinct and muffled—*Who calls?*

"Ship ahoy—boy adrift!" he replied.

Some hoarse answer was made, and then he heard, the well-known and welcome sound of a boat being hoisted and lowered. Next minute it was in sight, dashing right at him, with the huge bulk of the Indian looming up behind.

"Where away?" says one.

"This way, mate," replied Ned, who was now roused by hope.

But the men now saw the lights, and bore down upon him. Very few minutes elapsed ere he was hauled on board.

"My eye," said one of the men, "if it ain't some outlandish reefer. Where do you haul from, eh?"

"British Channel, just now," replied Ned, "faint, tired, and hungry; so pull away, and don't talk."

"Cuss my eyes, Bob," remarked one, "when this young bear comes aboard, with an old blue shirt on and a Scotch cap, we shall make him pay his footin' for his impudence."

With these words they reached the side, where the men ascended, Ned, from force of habit, remaining last, as claiming the highest rank. He then clambered on deck, to the crowd who were surveying him with eager eyes, caught sight of a naval uniform, and sprang him, a cap with a gold band, and white duck trowsers, which nondescript uniform became him well.

Very little allusion was made to the events which had brought our hero on board, but the conversation turned very much on the lad's early life, of which, however, the young buccaneer knew very little. The smuggler chief had often asserted that Ned was not his son, even alluding with much earnestness to the fact, though he would often say he was all the more bound to protect him.

Except those parts he had visited in the free-trader—in war times less looked down upon than now—he knew no land but Sheppeney. A servant was preparing tea very quietly.

Ned looked round with a dreamy stare, and then pointed to a water-bottle, as if he was faint, but the little girl handed him a glass of wine, which he drank hurriedly. "And now, my lad," said the stout gentleman, cheerily, "have some tea, and then, perhaps, you will tell us what you were doing off the Goodwin Sands on a couple of old water casks."

"Sir Stephen! Loo!" he cried, and then fell back, muttering to himself, "The Lord have mercy on my wicked soul!"

The little girl clapped her hands, laughed, and then gave him her hand to rise.

"Didn't I say it was Edward Drake?" she continued, as pale, ghastly, and scarcely able to stand, the young buccaneer allowed himself to be placed at the table, where, glad to avoid questioning, he appeared to devote himself wholly to the business of the moment.

The plot of Captain Gantling, his evil intention to the ship, his allusion to an enemy—and he was aware the pirate disliked, if he did not hate, Sir Stephen Rawdon—was commingled with the briny ocean, that not the ablest chemist that ever taught an admiring audience could have traced its presence.

There was nothing then left for him but to bend to circumstances, and wait upon that precarious tub-supported deck for such fortune as awaited him—capture by the sloop of war, safety from the buccaneer, or success and good luck on board the Indian and treasure ship. The reflections made the young sailor think somewhat seriously of other things; and it seemed to strike him, in that hour of peril and doubt, that perhaps the enterprise upon which he had started was not either the most honorable or the most proper upon which a youth might be engaged.

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"I feel as if there I had taken root and grown," he said, with a smile. "Even old Meg of the Red Cow, who brought me up to seven years, is in my mind but a part of the island."

"You never had an inkling of your origin, your parents, whence you came, or any thing of that kind?" asked Sir Stephen.

"Never," replied Ned, and then he faltered, "except once, a strange and unaccountable assertion."

"Speak it, boy. You have, strangely come under my care, and I will do every thing in my power to serve you."

Ned Drake then related that on board the smuggler was one Districk, a sailor who had always been a favorite of his, and who returned the liking. When he was younger, this man was fond of telling long-winded yarns to the youth, which often turned upon persons unlawfully deprived of their position and fortune.

"Ah, Ned," he would say, "there's many folk in this world as sells under false colors. I know some as might have to haul down their flag if you had your rights; but all in good time; he knows—he knows"—and he would point to the skipper—but don't say a word as I said so, or Master Ned, he'll cut my throat."

"Master Edward Drake," said Sir Stephen Rawdon, kindly, when he saw that our hero was mending a little, "but now I begin to know my old pupil again. Egad, sir, it was a queer way to come on board!"

"It was, sir," replied Ned, sadly; "and the best thing you can do is to throw me overboard again."

"Why?" said Sir Stephen, while Loo opened her great eyes and stared.

"Because you know the character of the craft to which I belong—to which I belonged," he added, with heartfelt emotion, "and which, if Providence offers me but a coal-barge in place of it, I will leave."

"Is not Captain Gantling your father?"

"I hope not, sir," said Ned, "though he has been very kind to me; but sometimes he is not my father. But I was going to say, I was put there to serve one of his purposes, and I have given a promise not to explain."

"Well—well—my good lad, you need say no more. I am going out to take the command of the Indian fleet, and if you really desire to abandon the unlawful course you have hitherto followed, why, I will take you to a midshipman myself—so say nothing about the smuggler on board. Leave all explanations to me."

"Aye, you are very kind, sir."

"Not at all. Loo, here, always liked you—you are her pet; so, as you have need of rest, stay with her. I will speak to the captain. When you are tired, there is a berth ready for you."

Ned Drake remained with Loo, quite bewildered, for though at any other time he would have delighted in the prattle of his old friend and favorite, Louisa Rawdon, yet now his thoughts were far away; and, pleading fatigue and exhaustion, he was soon glad to avail himself of the offer of the admiral, and retire to a state-room, there to give free scope to his pent-up feelings.

All his desires for an adventurous life—all his dreams for avenging his supposed father's wrongs—all his fantastic visions of a lovely island, covered by exquisite verdure, and peopled by dusky angels, with a royal in perspective, had vanished before the kindness shown him, not so much by Sir Stephen as by the little Loo, his playfellow and companion for three happy years.

"Why will you persist in seeing me, Edward," she said, "when you know that I have no right to meet you—I, the daughter of a patriotic Mexican—you, one of the race of the invader?"

"Because I love you," replied the young soldier, pressing her closer to his breast. "Because, to you and me these wars are as nothing, and the enemies of the race fade away. I love you, and by that love forget that I am not of your blood, or that you are not mine."

"You can not love as I do, Edward," she said, with her head upon his shoulder.

"The children of the North know nothing of the fervor of passion which burns in the bosom of the daughter of the South. For you I am ready to give up all—country, home, name, and friends—and to dwell in a cold land, far from my beloved Mexico; ah, me!"

"You shall never repent it, dear one," cried the young man, impulsively. "I will make your life so pleasant that you will forget all else, for my sake. When Monterey falls, and it must fall soon, you shall be my wife, and we shall never be parted again."

"Because I will hate me when he knows that I have given my heart to one of the enemies of Mexico," murmured Zara. "Ah, what a terrible passion is love, which makes us forget all else, and turn against the country we love!"

"What is this?" cried a harsh voice.

"Caramba, girl, what are you doing here?"

"My father!" cried Zara. "Oh, heaven! I am lost!"

The bushes parted, and a dark-brown man, in the garb of a Mexican ranchero, stood before them. He cast a fierce look at the young officer, and, seizing Zara by the arm, dragged her away.

"Stand back, foolish girl," he hissed, "or I shall do you a mischief! Away with you, and leave him openly, and in a way that becomes a sailor. How this was to be done he could not say, though he shrewdly suspected the opportunity.

He would then tell him his determination to defend Loo at the peril of his life, and if he would not abandon his designs, consider himself absolved from the fearful oath which hung now with such a leaden weight on his spirits. It was difficult for him to explain the sudden revulsion of feeling which the sight of the playfellow of his happy youth had brought about, but the truth was patent to his heart.

Even Captain Gantling had educated his *protégé* to tell the truth, and his three years' residence under a clergyman's tuition had fixed this one great cardinal virtue on his mind. He could not, therefore, reveal that he was resolved to foil whatever might be the evil intentions of the buccaneer toward Sir Stephen and Loo, for he was now certain that this was the man of whom he spoke as *mine enemy to slay*.

As to the treasure the ship contained, that he cared nothing about. His education had taught him to consider it a matter of cleverness to outwit the Government, nor was he likely in those days on Sheppeney Island to learn any very different notions. He would confine himself, therefore, to saving human life, and let every thing else take its course, though how he was to act in any case, without putting his new friends on their guard, he could not tell.

But no matter what he risked, were it his body or his soul, he would not have the fater of little Loo injured.

With this resolution firm in his head, he went to sleep, to dream uneasily, but at length to awake refreshed and resolute. He found when he rose some clean things, which the admiral had provided, and which his purse had easily commanded from the cadets, midshipmen, and merchant reefers on board. When, therefore, he appeared at breakfast, it was in a span-new blue jacket and anchor buttons, a cap with a gold band, and white duck trowsers, which nondescript uniform became him well.

Very little allusion was made to the events which had brought our hero on board, but the conversation turned very much on the lad's early life, of which, however, the young buccaneer knew very little. The smuggler chief had often asserted that Ned was not his son, even alluding with much earnestness to the fact, though he would often say he was all the more bound to protect him.

"Do not call me, my father. If you will not kill me, let him go in peace. He has done no wrong, for I alone am to blame."

"So it is ever with these thrice-accursed Americans," hissed La Vega. "They overrun our country, lay waste our cities, and turn our women against the country for which they should be willing to die. Hands off, Zara; I say that he shall not live."

He again raised the whistle, and she clung to his arm, and he could not sound it.

"Fly, Edward," she gasped. "I do not fear him, and you must escape."

By way of reply, the young soldier made a single forward step, and grasping the Mexican by the shoulder, tore the whistle from his hand and ground it beneath his heel.

He drew a whistle from beneath his clothing, and was about to raise it to his lips, when she sprang at him like a tigress, and grasped him by the arm.

"Do not call me, my father. If you will not kill me, let him go in peace. He has done no wrong, for I alone am to blame."

"I am not a man to suffer you to call your guerrillas to your side, Senor La Vega," he said. "Be

## MY EXPERIENCE.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

I heard Niagara's thunder roar,  
I saw the falls, I lost in frenzy,  
I stood to wonder and adore,  
And caught the influenza.

I sailed across the main whose ways  
Were strewn with many a floating wreck,  
I lost myself in deep amaze,  
But found myself quite sick.

I saw Mount Blanc, that towering rose,  
And took the topmost winter breeze,  
I stood to mark its glittering snows,  
And then began to sneeze.

I stood beneath St. Peter's dome,  
Where all we know of Art is shown,  
I gazed bewildered, ached and dumb,  
And then my coat took form.

I passed the world London crossed,  
Whose beacon-star was Hero's lamp,  
I turned again unto the coast  
Because I got the cramp.

I climb the grand old pyramid.  
Saw stretch away the sandy seas,  
And I was full of wonderment,  
And likewise full of fears.

And once I took farewell of friends  
And crossed the brine to Coney Isle,  
I had my pocket picked, eye blacked,  
And shipwrecked was my life.

You see I've sought each classic spot  
My roving body had beat for,  
But somehow for I always got  
More than I ever went for.

## Just in Time.

BY ROGER STARBUCK.

The setting sun shed rosy light upon the waters of Plymouth harbor, Massachusetts. The golden rays stream down through the rigging of a neat coasting schooner, anchored alongside a lonely pier, a short distance below the town, fell upon a pretty picture!

This was Minnie Warden, a beautiful girl of seventeen, wearing a broad-rimmed straw hat, and a dark dress, trimmed with red, which well became her rich olive complexion, glossy black hair and lively, piquant features. Every movement of the superb neck seemed to show to advantage the peculiar *liteness* of the matchless form, from the shoulders to the neat little gaiters, with the white stockings just revealed.

She leaned over the schooner's after-rail, her gaze turned shoreward, with a look half expectant.

Soon a fine-looking young sailor made his appearance, coming up a lane leading toward the pier.

At sight of Minnie, his whole face flushed with joy and his eyes shone like stars.

The girl blushed and smiled, as he took off his hat and bowed to her.

They had not seen each other for many months.

He was Captain Harry Windham, of the schooner. Minnie and he had been early playmates—boy and girl lovers. Several years previously she had left her mother to go to boarding school. During her vacations, she and Harry had met but once or twice, as he was often away on coasting voyages.

The old mate of the schooner, Mr. Briggs, was her uncle.

Home on vacation, at the present time, she had come aboard to see him.

"To see me," her uncle had said, mischievously, "and who else?"

"For shame, uncle," she had answered, pointing; "do you suppose—"

"He'll be here, presently," her uncle had interrupted.

"There!" Minnie had exclaimed, whirling round on her heel, and dealing her uncle a light 'box' on the ear. "I'll go right home to mamma! She sent me here to invite you to dinner to-morrow, but you are so bad that I am sorry I told you."

"I can not come. We sail at ten o'clock to-night, to be gone on a three months' voyage."

The young girl turned pale. Then she went on deck, and, as mentioned, stood by the rail, watching for Harry, for whom she also had a message from her mother.

Harry came aboard. She blushed deeply as they shook hands.

"You are looking finely," said he; "you have improved."

They conversed a few minutes, when Minnie said.

"We have a dinner-party to-morrow. Mamma wants you to come; but uncle says you sail at ten o'clock. Could you not put it off?"

"Do you wish it?" he inquired.

She smiled, then drew herself up.

"Mamma wishes it," she said, coquettishly and pointedly.

Harry looked sad.

The dark eyes were slyly turned an instant toward his downcast face.

The young captain loved this girl.

He had heard, however, that a young and handsome dry good's clerk visited her whenever she was home on vacation.

Report said they would make a match of it—were probably already engaged.

This had caused him much sorrow. Now he was determined, ere consenting to put off his sailing, to ascertain the truth at once; to propose to Minnie, and thus learn if she loved him or the other.

With a frankness rather abrupt, but peculiar to him, he now said, looking her square in the eyes:

"Minnie, I love you: will you be my wife?"

She smiled, blushed and tossed her glossy head like a young colt.

Encouraged he took her hand. She drew it quickly but not ungraciously away from him, and, without answering but apparently much embarrassed, commenced beating a tattoo on the deck with the heel of one of her little boots.

"Harry! Harry!" screamed Briggs from the cabin at this juncture. "Come, quick!"

The young man ran into the cabin, thinking that nothing short of the schooner being on fire would have caused Briggs to scream so lustily.

He learned, however, that the mate had merely discovered and was searching for a big rat, which he had seen run into the pantry.

Harry remained below about five minutes; then, trembling with impatience, he went on deck to get his answer from Minnie.

She was gone!

Something white lay on the deck. He picked it up—to discover a small piece of paper, upon which, in Minnie's handwriting, was scratched with a pencil:

"I have no love to give. My heart is another's!"

MINNIE."

So this was her answer. She had written it and then run away, not even stopping to bid him good-bye.

He crushed the note in his hand, and threw it overboard.

At nine o'clock, while Briggs and his men were making preparations to sail, Minnie's mother came aboard.

"Where is she?" inquired the matron of Captain Windham, who, with stern face and knitted brows, after his great sorrow, was seated in the cabin.

"Who, madam?" he inquired, much startled.

"My child—Minnie—she is aboard here, is she not?"

"Good heavens, no! Has she not gone home?"

"No. My child! My child! Oh, what can have happened to her?"

"I do not understand it," answered Harry.

"She must have left here at seven o'clock. Perhaps she has stopped at some friend's on the way."

"No; I have inquired at the house of every friend."

"Strange," said Harry, hoarsely; "this must be looked into."

He told Briggs to put off the sailing of the vessel, explaining about the missing one.

Briggs and he put on their coats, and went to assist Mrs. Warden in her search.

For an hour the search was in vain. Suddenly, however, while Briggs and Harry were returning toward the pier, they thought they could distinguish a dark object behind one of the huge logs, supporting the bridge. The two men ran aboard, lowering the schooner's boat, soon reached the object, to discover, by the light of their lanterns, that it was Minnie!

Her arms were entangled in the bight of a rope, which, extending from the schooner, was fast to one of the posts, her head hung sideways while her body was in the water. She was either senseless or dead!

The men conveyed her into the schooner's cabin, when Harry applied a bottle of brandy to her lips.

Color came to her cheeks; she opened her eyes.

Soon she was able to make explanations. While Harry was in the cabin, she had leaned too far across the rail, and had fallen overboard. The tide had carried her toward the post of the pier. Already she had sunk twice, but, on rising the third time, she had grasped the rope which, catching round her arms, had held her, as shown, although, becoming senseless, she knew no more from that time until she was restored.

At sight of Minnie, his whole face flushed with joy and his eyes shone like stars.

The girl blushed and smiled, as he took off his hat and bowed to her.

They had not seen each other for many months.

He was Captain Harry Windham, of the schooner. Minnie and he had been early playmates—boy and girl lovers. Several years previously she had left her mother to go to boarding school. During her vacations, she and Harry had met but once or twice, as he was often away on coasting voyages.

The old mate of the schooner, Mr. Briggs, was her uncle.

Home on vacation, at the present time, she had come aboard to see him.

"To see me," her uncle had said, mischievously, "and who else?"

"For shame, uncle," she had answered, pointing; "do you suppose—"

"He'll be here, presently," her uncle had interrupted.

"There!" Minnie had exclaimed, whirling round on her heel, and dealing her uncle a light 'box' on the ear. "I'll go right home to mamma! She sent me here to invite you to dinner to-morrow, but you are so bad that I am sorry I told you."

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"Halt!" shouted Rube, jerking his musket back upon her haunches and leaping down.

"Who's got a bit uv spunk?" asked the old trapper, and instantly half a dozen pieces of punk were produced and held up.

"One's anuff. Set her afire, an' keep her away till I hollers. Jess look, boyees, how ther wind's a-gittin' up. It'll blow harder'n that in a leetle, an' then we've got 'em, dum the' greasy top-knots! we've got 'em bad!"

He had kept a bright look-out for the "big rock" I heard the old fellow muttering about, and at the time we held in to permit the others coming up, I saw, far ahead, a dark object rising from the level which I judged to be the wished-for haven.

"Is that the rock, Rube?" I asked.

"It ar' that, but I see suthin' better'n git'in' thar. See the skunks dividin' so's to cut us off."

The wisdom of the remark was admitted at once, and in a few moments we were again all together.

It had been my custom in emergencies like the present, when old Rube was with us, to keep my eye on his movements. I could always judge pretty correctly as to the chances of escape by his manner, as well, or better, than by what he said, and, at the same time, be in position to quickly assist in carrying out any sudden movement he might order to be made. None of us even thought of going contrary to his advice or orders, and in a hundred instances we had realized the good of so doing.

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